

Special Education Advisory Council Meeting Notes
Meeting Date: October 21, 2009

Members present: Alice Angney; Adrienne Fisher; Karen Woolsey; Mary Koen; Margaret Wilson; Ann Czar; Eileen Guyette; David Lacroix; Sandy Bartley; Jean Haigh; Lisa Maynes; Ernie Wheeler; Karin Edwards

Discussion/ Topic	Suggested Actions/Follow-up	Person Responsible	Timeline
<p>TOPIC 1: Presentation to the State Board in January</p> <p>Only change in order is to the last two slides, making sure the tense is consistent throughout and the State Board collaboration with DOE to include the Council.</p>			
<p>TOPIC 2: State Updates – Personnel</p> <p>The Specific Learning Disabilities Consultant position is vacant but has approval for rehiring. One Educational Support System team member (Bev Heise) has retired, will try to rehire that position. Administrative Assistant for monitoring and surrogate parent program has left for another position and will not be rehired. Rae Ann Knopf has been promoted to the Deputy Commissioner position and Carol Randall will be filling her role as Assistant Director for the Student Support and Healthy Learning Team.</p>			

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<p>TOPIC 2: State Updates continued – Department Reorganization – The reduction in staff over the past two years by approximately 20 % has caused us to look at both what we do and what we need to do differently. Best practices are being reviewed and a modified business analysis of the Department is being conducted. This has been a more thoughtful and inclusive process within the Department than have other reorganization efforts in the past.</p> <p>Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) federal visit lasted four days and primarily focused on general supervision, data management and finance. Many of the areas of concern they found can be corrected prior to the issuance of their letter of findings. The biggest issue seems to be our suppression of data for cells that contain less than 11 students, so that either location or disability category could be drilled down to an individual student level and compromise student confidentiality.</p> <p>We also need to check with districts to assure that if they are conducting local assessments (district-wide assessments) that they are also offering an alternative local assessment for those unable to partake in the local assessment.</p>	<p>Focused groups are looking at information on the changing roles of State Departments of Education. How do staff numbers look as compared to 1972, before Sped laws?</p> <p>Could the suppression policy be changed to reflect just our reporting of data to OSEP?</p>		

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<p>TOPIC 2: State Update continued – OSEP Visit – Wording in our rules and on the due process form must be clear that the form developed by the State is not required and that parents/schools can file using another form so long as all the necessary information is contained within the other form.</p> <p>Systems must be put in place to assure that findings of noncompliance from site visits, desk reviews, due process and administrative complaints are corrected within one year.</p> <p>Vermont Restraint Legislation – closely follows Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) model. No chemical or mechanical restraints. Restraint used for safety sake not as a behavioral intervention. The biggest issue continues to be record keeping and tracking data.</p> <p>Graduation - Sen. Susan Bartlett has introduced a bill allowing students to participate in graduation ceremonies with their peers, if the student has in place a plan for graduation. Currently not a law.</p> <p>Rule Revision - Comment period on rules is over. DOE will be putting out a document reflecting comments this year. The order has been put back to the previous rules.</p>	<p>Rae Ann is off the PBS team and Carol Randall will take her place.</p>		

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<p>TOPIC 2: State Update continued – Rules – Adverse Effect section returns to previous format – heard from many of the need to open the discussion and train teachers before changing it, perhaps looking to operationalize the need for special education rather than the adverse effect section.</p> <p>Funding section regarding Core staff designations and co-teaching is still undecided.</p> <p>Parental Rights - is much harder to read than previously. Supporting materials that were in the previous Parental Rights are to be put out in a document authored by the Vermont Family Network (formerly VPIC).</p> <p>Legal - The DOE has a new special education attorney. Susan Marks is from California and has 20 years of experience. Her primary concern is with the student and how to resolve a problem without going to litigation.</p> <p>American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) – a review of fund spending shows many were used for Early Intervening Services (targeted for students that might become eligible for special education); many construction requests (elevator, playground access, apartment for teaching independent living skills).</p>	<p>Need to decouple Core from co-teaching.</p> <p>Parental Rights are being translated into 16 languages.</p> <p>Invite Susan to a future SEAC meeting</p>		

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<p>TOPIC 2: State Updates – Post-Secondary Transition – John Spinney has developed an online training for secondary special educators for transition planning.</p> <p>Juvenile Detention Center information – Assessment data is all that we are required to report on.</p> <p>Who serves as the state’s Community Parent Resource Center? Currently, is that the Vermont Family Network?</p>	<p>http://tlcworkshops.pbworks.com/ (link to page)</p>		
<p>TOPIC 3: Future Work –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Update Members List and Phone Tree 2. Can we bring John Copenhagen to speak to us? 3. Vermont Family Network representative to come talk to us about their organizational change. 4. Future retreat – revisit our mission, vision and direction forward 	<p>Reproduce new members binders</p>	<p>Eileen</p>	